

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated January 11, 2007. Claims, 1, 22, 24 to 26 and 37 has been amended. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

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The Office Action objected to Claim 38 because it has been claimed twice. The same claim was inadvertently filed twice. Please disregard the second Claim 38.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 to 5, 7, 9 to 13, 15 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 37, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,033,307 to Vancura ("Vancura").

Vancura discloses a method for:

playing a bonus game in a secondary slot machine adjacent a primary slot machine. The primary slot machine issues a bonus qualifying signal to the secondary slot machine to start play of a bonus game when a bonus qualifying event occurs. The reels of the bonus game include value symbols, null symbols, and end game symbols which may be of two basic types: a lose game symbol and a stop game symbol. After the random spin, the values of any value symbols displayed on the payline of the secondary slot machine are accumulated into an accumulated winning value. The value symbols could include positive integer values, negative integer values, and multiples. The random spinning, determination of values of any value symbol and the accumulation of a winning value is repeatedly continued until an end of the bonus game occurs. ...

The primary slot machine 10 functions as a normal slot machine, except that if two "bonus" symbols appear on the payline, then a bonus qualifying event in the form of a signal appears on line 30 and play enters the bonus mode of the present invention. The bonus symbols can appear on the payline 65 or, in some versions, in the window 45. ...

The bonus qualifying event for the bonus game of the present invention is the appearance of a bonus symbol or bonus symbols at the primary gaming machine 10 resulting in a bonus qualifying signal on line 30. However, any suitable bonus qualifying event could be utilized such as a combination of symbols appearing on the payline of the primary machine, the occurrence of a random event which is unrelated to the game outcome of the primary gaming machine 10, a function of the number of coins played, and the like. The qualifying event may also be a function of an

accumulated value in the winnings of the primary gaming machine 10. Any suitable qualifying event (or mechanism) signal appearing on line 30 from the primary game 10 could be utilized to start play of the bonus game 20.

Vancura does not disclose a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol displayed simultaneously on the reels. Specifically, Vancura discloses bonus symbols in a primary game represented by the symbol MM. These bonus symbols of Vancura are not the value symbols of Vancura. Rather, the bonus symbols are in a separate game than the value symbols. Vancura discloses a primary game on a first display device generates the MM symbols, causing a second separate bonus game to be initiated on a second, separate display device. It is the separate bonus game that includes the value symbols.

Additionally, Vancura does not disclose a game wagerable upon by a player, a plurality of reels including a plurality of symbols in the game, the symbols including at least one award symbol, and at least one positive modifier symbol and at least one negative modifier symbol and a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol displayed simultaneously on the reels and an award adapted to be provided to the player in the game, wherein the award is associated with the award symbol and modified by a designated number of positive modifiers associated with any displayed positive modifier symbol and a designated number of negative modifiers associated with any displayed negative modifier symbol. In Vancura, the triggering event is based on bonus symbols generated in the primary game on the first display device. Upon generation of the bonus symbols, the gaming device generates new symbols on a second display device. Vancura discloses two separate games: a primary game which includes bonus symbols and a second game which includes value symbols. Vancura does not disclose a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol displayed simultaneously on the reels and an award adapted to be provided to the player in the game, wherein the award is associated with the award symbol and modified by a designated number of positive modifiers associated with any displayed positive modifier symbol and a designated number of negative modifiers associated with any displayed negative modifier symbol.

Applicants disagree with the Office Action's rejections of Claims 1 to 5, 7, 9 to 13, 15 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 37, 39 and 40 over Vancura. Nevertheless, Applicants amended certain of these claims to place the application in condition for allowance. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute such claims or similar claims in one or more continuation or patent applications.

Claim 1 includes, in combination with other elements, at least one processor programmed for a play of the game to: (a) cause a display of a plurality of the symbols on the reels; (b) upon an occurrence of a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol being displayed simultaneously on the reels, display an award associated with the award symbol; and (c) modify the award by a designated number of positive modifiers associated with any of the displayed positive modifier symbols on the reels and a designated number of negative modifiers associated with any of the displayed negative modifier symbols on the reels. Vancura does not disclose these elements.

Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentably distinguished over Vancura and is in condition for allowance. Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 5, 7, 9 to 13, 15 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 37, 39 and 40 are patentably distinguished over Vancura for reasons similar to the reasons submitted with respect to Claim 1 and Claims 5, 7, 9 to 13, 15 to 21, 24, 27, 30 to 37, 39 and 40 are in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 6, 8, 14, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Vancura.

Claims 6, 8 and 14 include, in combination with other elements, a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol displayed simultaneously on the reels and at least one processor programmed for a play of the game to: (a) cause a display of a plurality of the symbols on the reels; (b) upon an occurrence of a triggering event based on at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol being displayed simultaneously on the reels, display an award associated with the award symbol; and (c) modify the award by a designated number of positive modifiers associated with any of the displayed positive modifier symbols on the reels and a designated number of negative modifiers associated with any of the

displayed negative modifier symbols on the reels. Vancura does not teach, disclose or suggest these elements.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 6, 8 and 14 are patentably distinguished over Vancura and are in condition for allowance. Additionally, Applicants submit that Claims 25, 26, 28 and 29 are patentably distinguished over Vancura for reasons similar to the reasons submitted with respect to Claims 6, 8 and 14 and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 22 and 23 include, in combination with other elements, a processor programmed for each play of the game to cause a display of a plurality of the symbols on the reels, wherein the positive modifier symbol and the negative modifier symbol are able to be simultaneously displayed and activated, upon an occurrence of a triggering event, cause a display of the award and modify the award by any positive modifier values associated with any of the displayed positive modifier symbols and modify the award by any negative modifier values associated with any of the displayed negative modifier symbols. Vancura does not teach, disclose or suggest this combination of elements.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 22 and 23 are patentably distinguished over Vancura and are in condition for allowance.

Additionally, the Office Action states that "the average value of the symbols and the probability of selecting a particular symbol is a design choice." Applicants respectfully disagree with this statement. The average value of symbols and the probability of selecting a particular symbol for a particular game contribute to the structure of the game and define the specific elements of that game. They are not design choices but are award parameters for the game.

The Office Action rejected Claim 38 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Vancura in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,816,918 to Kelly ("Kelly").

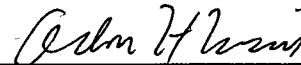
Neither Vancura nor Kelly teaches, discloses or suggests initiating a bonus game including a bonus award when at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol occur on the reels. Additionally neither Vancura nor Kelly teaches, discloses or suggests a method of operating a gaming device which includes (a) activating and displaying a plurality of reels including a plurality of symbols, the symbols including at

least one award symbol, at least one positive modifier symbol and at least one negative modifier symbol, (b) initiating a bonus game including a bonus award when at least the award symbol and the positive modifier symbol are simultaneously displayed on the reels, (c) displaying the bonus award, (d) modifying the displayed bonus award with a designated number of negative modifiers associated with any of the negative modifier symbols displayed on the reels, (e) modifying the bonus award with a designated number of positive modifiers associated with any of the positive modifier symbols displayed on the reels; and (f) providing the modified bonus award to a player.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 38 is patentably distinguished over Vancura in view of Kelly and is in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLP
BY



Adam H. Masia
Reg. No. 35,602
Cust. No. 29159
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